

San Antonio in the local papers.

As a parent, I've been shocked by the DJ's talk on KZEP in the mornings. My kids listen to it when they wake up on the alarm clock. Its ama — it's outrageous.

As a lawyer, I represent people who have been blackballed by corporate media. They can't just work in this town, they can't work anywhere because their influence is so vast. I've represented station managers, I've represented local talent, print journalists, and let me tell you, they can't be here tonight to tell you that some of these journalists who put these news stories together in the public interest get their stories axed, because it's not in the conglomerate's best interests. They can't report those abuses to you.

And as a leader in the environmental community our stories get short changed. If we get coverage at all, and we have to go through a lot of hoops to get coverage, our perception is the media doesn't give full coverage to our issues.

And I can tell you this: We haven't seen enough of T.C. Calvert's East side African community stories about the contamination from the CPS power

plant.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Margarita Chavez. I'm from Abilene, Texas. I'm glad to be here today. I'm very pleased to be here today. I want to share my story about the kidnapping of my baby. I want to tell you about the ordeal that I went through on August 13, 2002. My baby daughter Nancy here with me was kidnapped in a Wal-Mart parking lot. The kidnapping happened in front of my eyes in broad daylight. A woman took my baby out of my car just, just when I just returned the shopping cart to its place and she took the chance to — that chance to take my baby out of my car.

I'm here to support the Amber Alert. Thanks to the Amber Alert my baby was found the very next day safe and sound.

(Applause.)

And she's here with me thanks to the great and excellent job of the media, my local media. They did a very good job. I'm so thankful, grateful to them, and I want to encourage them to keep up the good work. I'm so grateful with them, and I thank God that they used them with a lot of wisdom and will. Thank

you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you all. My name is Deborah Lavoy (phonetic), and I hope that you all have taken in all of the comments that have been made here tonight about the need for diversity. I wish that you could stay and listen to the people who have been here since 4:00 a.m.

(Applause.)

My concern — my concern is that while news may be local, it still is often superficial and does little to serve community needs. To give an example, following — to add to the number of examples you've heard, following the State of the Union address on Tuesday, I watched what I think was KENS-5, our local CBS affiliate, and the first eight minutes they ran ten stories, that's less than a minute a story. Certainly not enough time to give quality or in-depth information. And there was no story I heard about the State of the Union address or how it affects us here in San Antonio.

Many of the stories were not important to me. I'm sorry there was a fire. I'm sorry about the little boy that starved to death, but those are only

superficially reported. I'd like to hear about what's being done to prevent such tragedies, and what can members of the community do to help affected families. But instead of answering those questions, the news went to commercial. How is that local? Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Chairman Powell and Commissioners, my name is Augie Grant. I'm a former Associate Professor at the University of Texas. I'm currently visiting Professor at the University of South Carolina. For the past six years I've conducted systematic studies of Texas broadcasters' public service activities. These activities have been summarized in a report that is going to be made available in the electronic filing that I encourage everyone to take advantage of.

But to summarize, over the past six years broadcasters that have responded, we are not projecting results, broadcasters responding have donated more than 2.4 billion dollars in air time, airing more than 30 million public service announcements. That's an average of one every six seconds just in the State of Texas. You'll have similar results if you do studies nationwide as well.

These same broadcasters have aired in the past six years more than nine thousand political debates and aired more than — I'm sorry — almost half a million promotional announcements telling people these debates are coming. I encourage you to look at the statistics of the facts underlying the broadcasters' performance. They do much more, including the Amber program, scholarships, et cetera. Their contributions can definitely be measured and are definitely making an impact. Thank you.

(Applause and boos.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I understand we're down to one minute from two before, so I'll try to make it short. Good evening, my name is T. C. Smythe. I'm a full-time singer, songwriter from Houston, Texas. Seven years ago I joined my local songwriters association, and they taught me how to write, record, sing and pitch my songs to publishers, record labels and radio stations. I worked hard, and I won several regional and national awards for my songwriting. Since then I've sold thousands of CDs from the edge of the stage, but I've learned that if I don't write a song that can make people want to drink beer, or buy insurance, commercial radio won't play it.

(Applause.)

This has nothing to do with my ability as a performer or a writer. My performance and protection values can compete with any project here or in Nashville. I'm not unique or alone.

Please review the audio samples you received in your handouts. This is a compilation of Houston-based writers who despite their efforts and outrageous talent are denied air time for one reason: local broadcasters will not play independent music. I've sent press releases and CDs to every major FM station in Texas on behalf of myself and these artists, and when I called to confirm receipt I was asked who my major label was and if I would be willing to buy advertising. The custodians of the airwaves need to be reminded that all radio is public radio, and they are required to reflect the communities from which they derive their vast wealth. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is...

(inaudible) ...Frost, and I'm a local high school student. Firstly, I would like to beg that in your future conferences you open up a speaker's list so there's a fair way for people who were here earlier to

speak.

(Applause.)

Secondly, I would like to speak on something that's truly a ba — bipartisan issue. My concern is that domination of local media by one company homogenizes the news we get and the slant it's given at. Thus, it affects opinions of the viewers of television, the listeners of radio and the readers — readers of local papers. In effect, it affects democracy. I know that Clear Channel and Time Warner aren't here to protect our interests. They're corporations, they need to make money. But I know that the FCC was created to protect our interests.

(Applause.)

I didn't come to tell you how to do your jobs because I'm sure you know what they are. I came to implore this committee to look past any sponsored lunches you might get or corporate gifts you may receive. I came to implore you to fulfill the expectations our community has and the communities around the nation.

In San Antonio for example, Clear Channel owns a large percentage of the billboards, television stations, radio stations and public venues. With the

amazing influence they have on the city seemingly unchecked by the FCC, they can easily crush any organization or local political official that might have an opposing view. What I'm asking is that you protect our interest, you protect our views and you protect us.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: First off — first off, good evening, Commissioners and fellow Americans. My name is Nicole Thomas. I love San Antonio. I think it's a great place to live. But did you know many stations only devote two hours a week to local artists? I know Clear Channel needs to promote its own artists and venues. I would like Clear Channel to look at me more than just a way to make money. My interests and my city needs to be represented. We need more local radio and news stations.

I'm asking the FCC to keep their promises to reinstate a full low-power FM plan. With this our community will get the power and control it needs to be successful. Do we really want the government controlling our public airwaves for their best interest? No. Because they use the media to influence our actions and views are of what they desire. Our

government stopped Microsoft from developing a monopoly in the computer industry. Why then, will they allow someone to have monopoly in the media industry? Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I would like to thank you and your panel for taking time away from your families to hear our voices tonight. Good evening. My name is Deputy... (inaudible) ...and I'm with the Bexar County Sheriff's Office Crisis Intervention Unit.

Our unit is responsible for the recovery of missing children and the follow-up investigation of sexually, physically and abused and exploited children. Sheriff Ralph Lopez and the Bexar County Sheriff's Office immediately recognized the importance and the need for the Amber Alert, primarily for the safety of our children, but secondly based on the number of cases files our unit investigates.

We have fought diligently and successfully for the Amber Alert. This is an essential tool for law enforcement. We, as law enforcement, work very hard and respond immediately, but even we have our limitations. The Amber Alert increases our eyes one

hundred-fold. We in Bexar County take special interest in our children. The Amber Alert partners our community watching television and listening to the radio with the Bexar County Sheriff's office and in doing so creates law enforcement — a larger law enforcement community and a safer Bexar County for our children. We pray that you give every child every chance possible. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Laura Smith. After working for nearly 13 years in television news, I now teach broadcast journalists at the University of Texas, and I also study the issue of duopolies and their impact on local news.

I want to talk about localism by relaying a story. Last year I worked for two months in a local newsroom in Austin to try and understand their decision-making process. And what I noticed in those two months was that they had a very white, very male newscast, despite having an extremely diverse staff, and I wondered why that was. So I talked to the news director about it and he said that he has been a news director for 20 years, he knows what is news, and he knows that Austin is no different than what is news in

Atlanta. This is an institutional town, and I give them institutional news.

Earlier tonight a number of community groups came up and talked about what good things stations were doing from them (sic). I don't dispute that. But look at these groups: The Salvation Army, children's hospitals — hardly controversial groups seeking to have their voices heard.

(Applause.)

These corporations are growing in size and strength with your help, and with very little examination of whether their content truly serves the public's best interest. Whether it's through ascertainment requirements or a stricter re-licensure system, I strongly urge you to reconsider what you're doing and serve the public interest in our stead. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good evening. My name is Stan Thomas. Thanks to FCC Commissioners Copps and Adelstein, we ordinary citizens, the owners of the airwaves, have this very limited opportunity to have our voices heard on an issue which is the life blood of our threatened democracy: who controls the media,

ordinary citizens or multi-national media conglomerates?

We ordinary citizens depend on newspapers, radio, television and the Internet to provide us with access to a wide and diverse range of opinions. Paraphrasing Barbara Renata Gonzalez of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, diverse opinions are not being heard on the local airwaves and diversity is a bedrock of a truly representative democracy. No thanks to FCC Chairman Michael Powell and the other two members, Commissioners Martin, Commissioners Abernathy, because they are handing over on the proverbial silver platter control of the media to a few very powerful and very rich media conglomerates: Time Warner, Disney, Viacom and Clear Channel to name a few.

According to data assembled from the FCC's own travel records over the past eight years, industry groups and media corporations regulated by the FCC, have paid for more than 2,500 junkets for FCC Commissioners and top staff, providing travel, lodging and entertainment here and abroad costing 2.8 million dollars.

Some say that a regulated industry has a stranglehold over the regulator, the FCC, and its

congressional overseers. By the way, the Bush administration is preserving — is pressuring the FCC to proceed on the path of giving more control to the media conglomerates. We ordinary citizens don't stand a chance against these this power — these powerful and influence of these corporate titans in the Bush administration unless we speak up. We must speak up. Let there be no doubt that we, the ordinary citizens, own the airwaves and fully intend to keep it that way. Our fragile democracy is at stake. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good afternoon, Chairman — good afternoon, Chairman Powell and Commissioners. My name is Maria Salazar. I'm a freshman at Communications Arts High School. Communications Arts High School was created in 1994 by five founding partners, Trinity University, KSAT-12, Telemundo, San Antonio Express News and WOAI New Radio 1200, a Clear Channel owned and operated company.

My teacher is very enthusiastic and made my class aware about the FCC meeting and that our principal had agreed for us to go to it. Permission slips were passed out to students and asked to be brought back to school. I was very excited to attend

an event that my community was concerned about. On Monday our trip was cancelled, supposedly due to a lack of seating. How many students were coming? Looking around I don't see how about 25 students wouldn't have been able to find seats if the school really wanted us to come, or did our media sponsors influence the decision to cancel our trip? I'll never know.

Our communications arts curriculum is based on the premise that the 21st century will demand strong communication skills in reading, speaking, listening and thinking, according to the school's web page. This sounds so noble, but shouldn't our school make an even bigger effort in trying to get us to look more into the career fields that they're preparing us for? Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. My name is Melissa Rodriguez, and I'm a freshman at Communications Arts High School also. Right now the media in San Antonio does not inform the people about things that actually matter.

For instance, we have almost no news about the environment which is a very important issue here. San Antonio is being severely affected by toxic

environmental pollution at what used to be Kelly Air Force Base. Toxins have seeped into the ground water. This contamination poses a great risk to a large number of people who live near this former government base. The local media has not paid enough attention to this issue. This story went through the news cycle in about a week. TV and radio stations hardly talked about — hardly talked about the people that live near the contaminated area, even though many of them have been complaining about the effects of the pollution. They failed to inform us about all the damage and the many consequences that have come from this environmental disaster and are still affecting us today. I want my local media to have better coverage of important issues like the Kelly USA clean up.

Corporate media fails again and again to make local news and issues its focus. Corporate ownership of our San Antonio local media censors our voices and concerns, and we lose information about critical emergencies such as dangerous accidents, natural disasters, toxic spills and health issues. We lose coverage of community events important to the life of the city and its neighborhoods.

Citizens should help decide what is played

on TV or radio. Ordinary citizens should have ownership of these stations so they can have a voice beyond mega corporations such as Clear Channel. I believe that with powerful corporations such as Clear Channel in San Antonio that control over 70 percent of popular radio and TV, we do not receive information that they do not want us to have. I urge this FCC Task — FCC Task Force on localism to listen to the people's desire to have more radio stations, more media outlets, free airwaves that are not owned by just one, two or three companies with power, but by a wide and deep diversity of voices.

(Applause.)

(Singing in Spanish.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: This song calls on us to protect and honor the sacred voices that speak for the poor and disenfranchised, so that we can maintain hope, joy and light. My name is Graciela Sanchez, and I am with the Buena Gente of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center.

(Applause.)

In San Antonio we are subjected to aggressive control of news reporting. The radio waves are dominated by a culture of greed and a culture of

violence. In blatant and subtle ways information is filtered, evalu — evaluation is biased and voices of the dissent are ignored, demonized or ridiculed. The many Clear Channel stations promote the opinions of its owners even to the extent of financing pro-war and pro-development rallies —

(Applause.)

— and then — and then reporting on them as if they were independent actions as they did last year.

I know people have come here and supported and thanked Clear Channel, and I know Clear Channel has done some good things for some members in the community, but in 1997, '98 there was an organized campaign of conservative radio talk shows that targeted the Esperanza for a progressive, pro-Latino, pro-people of color, pro-women and pro-gay viewpoints. Within time the Esperanza was completely defunded by city leaders. We went to court. We won the lawsuit in Federal District Judge (sic).

(Applause.)

We won in 2001 with the Federal District Judge, and still this October and November, WOAI radio spent a whole week, and it was followed up with WOAI-

TV, demonizing the Esperanza. It didn't matter that we won in court. So we challenge you to maintain the FCC ruling as it is. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, Chairman Powell and the rest of the FCC people, Commissioners up there for giving me the opportunity to speak. I'm sorry that someone that stayed here as long as they did at 4:00 a.m. was not able to speak because of lack of organization. I'll take that out of my two minutes.

My name is Jack Corbin. I started Stone City Attractions, a Stone — a San Antonio concert firm over 30 ago, and recently formed Stone City Productions, Jack... (inaudible) ...presents, promoting concerts, other entertainment events throughout the southwest. We have competed very strongly in many markets with conglomerates that own concert firms as well as radio stations, TV stations and the like —

I know you may feel you have heard it all before, both the positives and the negatives of consolidation, but just let me relay my own experience. I started my concert firm with \$500 over 30 years ago, and all I had was a dream. And now I'm proud to say I've promoted and/or produced almost every

major name act from the Rolling Stones to Santana, from Kenny G to Julio Iglesias, all types of music. But above all else, we're proud of our community involvement, from the numerous benefits we have done to just plain donating without fanfare or press conferences, tens of thousands of dollars to local flood victims and the needy.

I remember back in 1972 I took a tape, not a CD, or an LP of a local band, to a major radio station, KTSA, and they helped me promote that band and their concert with that tape. That is an absolute impossibility now. We need more local ownership and local input into stations' content.

The stability of stations using the public airwaves should not be judged by their bottom line, but the quality of their content. For-profit corporations answer to the majority of their stockholders who fail -- who without fail care mainly, if not solely, about the bottom line. They have a different goal than community service and diversity. Your Commission needs to protect the public interest and the airwaves. No doubt we need change. We need corporations with compassion. We need conglomerates with a conscience, and we need a Commission with courage. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hello. Hello. My name is Michael Martinez (phonetic). I'm with the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. I'm here first to say — use a word that I've heard a lot over Clear Channel affiliates, democracy, democracy. We have been fed how we're going everywhere in the world to teach about democracy, and yet this board, this panel did not participate in democracy when they were supposed to have our best interest as a community at hand and made the decision to sell us down the road. And I will look in each one of your eyes and tell me — tell you — you are not doing things in my best interest. You are not things in my best interest. You are not doing things in my interest.

(Applause.)

For those of you who did do things in my best interest, thank you.

(Laughter.)

I also want to point out that democracy is something that is learned. It's about fairness. What has happened in this meeting and possibly in the meeting before is not about fairness. How these meetings have been set up have been a guessing game for

the people who have stayed here all night long to talk, to voice their opinions, to be heard. I suggest that this panel start practicing the idea of fairness and democracy when thinking about these meetings, so that people know exactly when they're doing and what they're doing. So they don't have to stand here in line and hustle and have to pick up their elders and bring them forward. This is not democracy. This is the Clear Channels and the giant companies that have reserved seats right and left, but we have to battle for a place here. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good evening. My name is Tish Stringer. I'm from the Houston Independent Media Center, a local chapter of an international alternative media network.

(Applause.)

You may like to attempt to divorce the issue of media concentration from that of localism, but that simply isn't possible. It is my contention that a remote board of directors or a CEO doesn't know what is best for my local community. My airwaves are for encouraging real democracy and highlighting the diversity of news and perspectives on the ground. I

urge you to support local broadcasting. Most importantly, by reversing the relaxed media ownership rules that you approved this past June, but also in supporting community media initiatives such as low-power FM licensing, including in metropolitan areas by opening the second adjacent channels. I want you to require mega-media corporations to offer open air time to community groups by playing public service announcements in prime time rotation, by supporting public access programming, not just on cable, and by offering prime time point-counter-point access.

We must encourage a rich media environment where the true diversity of views, opinions can be presented. Only in this way can we ever hope to have a strong, engaged, informed citizenry equipped to be active participants in civil society and in our democracy. The airwaves belong to the public. They are not for corporate profit. Thank you.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, Commissioners. My name is Stephanie Gross, and I'm an organizer with TEXPIRG, the Texas Public Interest Research Group. TEXPIRG's mission is to be an advocate on behalf of the public interests. We identify threats

to the national environment and the rights of consumers, and backed by thorough research we seek to end them. Whether it's cleaning up power plant pollution or speaking out against insurance companies using unfair practices to set rates, the success of our campaigns depends on a media responsive to the responsibility to cover local problems.

Therefore, the Commission's decision to weaken media ownership rules does not serve the public interest. The purpose of this hearing is to improve how broadcasters serve local communities. However, the hearing is too little, too late, to take into account how ownership affects local news and views presented. Indeed, after holding just one hearing outside of Washington, D.C., this Commission ignored millions of letters from a broad spectrum of groups all across the county who supported the stronger rules. By allowing television and radio stations to be owned by fewer companies and by allowing television broadcasters and newspaper publishers to own each other and not have to compete for news, the FCC has jeopardized our democracy. It's essential that Texans see and read and hear a variety of viewpoints before they make up their mind on important issues facing this state.

(Applause.)

TEXPIRG believes that placing power to speak in the hands of a few companies will destroy the people's first amendment free speech rights to hear from, as the Supreme Court put it, diverse and antagonistic sources. A marketplace of ideas with only one or two ideas for sale isn't competitive, and as we have heard time and time again tonight, it's boring and repetitive and uninspiring. America deserves better.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. I hope that the committee and the panelists will excuse me for being a little bit nervous and a little bit tired. I have been here since 4 o'clock in the morning, and I am — just — — I just really want to get my voice across, so I hope you can take a minute to listen to me.

My name is Kristin Gorsline (phonetic), and I live in San Antonio. I don't have a TV, so I rely on the radio for my news.

(Applause.)

Instead, I find issues that are important to me and my community aren't covered on the radio. For instance, public transit is ignored. Changes to the bus schedule to include frequency, additions and

deletions were considered — weren't considered big news to the radio station and ignored during prime hours, even though many San Antonians, myself included, use the buses every day to go back and forth from work.

As well, I heard very little coverage of my local elections and abstained from voting in my district because I felt I was too uneducated on the candidates and the issues to vote. I feel if the current media doesn't think my local issues are important, issues that affect how I live my life, how I work, what sort of direction San Antonio is heading towards, that the companies don't care about San Antonians and are therefore not responsible to tell our stories. To further deregulate the media only condones the present ineffective and disrespectful local coverage and devalues the citizens of San Antonio, Texas and the United States. Thank you for listening to me.

(Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hello. Hello. My name is George Camantez (phonetic). Some of you have asked where's the local on-air talent, people that are trying to get into these Clear Channels and other multimedia